



# EXODUS

A STORY OF  
**REDEMPTION  
AND COVENANT**





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# God Is Faithful

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- We can have faith in God because He is faithful
- Exodus 4:27–4:31
- Moses told God he wasn't capable of saving God's people, and God told Moses He would give Moses the power and the words to say.
- He would work through Moses and give him everything he needed to accomplish his mission.
- God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called.



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# God Is Faithful

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- God gave Moses miraculous power and the words to speak and even sent Moses' brother, Aaron, to help him.
- God overcame all of Moses' objections and fully equipped him for the mission to which He was calling him.
- Aaron met up with Moses, and the two of them met with the elders of Israel.
- They showed them all the miraculous signs God had given them, which proved they were sent from God. The people believed, and they worshipped God for hearing their cries and coming to rescue them.



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# God Is Faithful

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- Everything seemed to be on track for success. Everything was going just as God had promised.
- A success at this part of the story would have been very encouraging to Moses and Aaron.
- God had given them everything they needed, and the people believed their signs and were on board with the mission.
- It would have been hard for Moses and Aaron to approach Pharaoh without the faith of the people.



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# God Is Faithful

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- It takes faith to follow God's calling, especially outside of your comfort zone.
- Especially against a formidable enemy such as Pharaoh.
- Especially when you feel ill-equipped for the task.
- Moses and Aaron and the people had faith, but it wasn't blind faith.
- They put their trust in God because He had proven He was worthy of their faith.



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# God Is Faithful

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- God had proven Himself faithful to Moses and Aaron by giving them His power.
- He had proven Himself faithful to the people by hearing their cries and coming to their aid.
- He wasn't asking them to blindly follow a God they didn't know.
- They were to put their trust in the God of their fathers, who had been there for them in the past and was proving His power and love for them now.



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# God Is Faithful

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- This is how they could follow God out of their comfort zones.
- They trusted that He was God, He was in control, and He loved them and had their best interests at heart.
- We can follow God even into the great unknown because we know Him.
- It's not about knowing the destination or everything that will happen along the journey, it's about knowing the One who is leading us.



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# Harder and Better

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- Sometimes things get harder before they get better
- Exodus 5:1–18
- We might imagine this meant they would walk into Pharaoh's palace and ask him to let the people go.
- God had warned Moses that Pharaoh wouldn't let the people go right away (4:21–23), so Moses probably should have anticipated this.
- But with the way those first few verses went so smoothly, it feels like a huge shift in the story.



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# Harder and Better

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- Moses and Aaron only asked Pharaoh to let the people go into the wilderness to have a feast of worship.
- They didn't ask him to free the people altogether.
- They weren't asking for a vacation but a break to worship their God.
- It was typical to spend several days in festivals in the ancient world, and because the Israelites were from another place, it made sense to ask to go away from Egypt to worship their God.
- It wasn't an unusual request.



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# Harder and Better

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- They didn't ask for much, but Pharaoh wouldn't allow even that.
- He called them "idle" for asking for a break to worship, but his concern wasn't their productivity.
- If it were, he wouldn't have taken away their straw.
- That would slow down production no matter how hard they worked.
- His refusal was about his control over them and their loyalty to him.



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# Harder and Better

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- Worship of God was a challenge to his authority not only as a human king, but because he saw himself as a god.
- That's why he answered them, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?"
- Their fear of the Lord was a challenge to his authority.
- Pharaoh had to show them that he was the authority, not their God.
- Of course, God would prove him wrong.



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# Harder and Better

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- It's likely that Pharaoh's concern wasn't just about the three-day break from work.
- If he let them have this break, it could have led to a stronger sense of national identity as their own people, which might lead to a resistance movement, which might lead to their joining forces with Egypt's enemies as the previous Pharaoh had feared when he saw Israel becoming stronger.
- Like the pharaoh who originally enslaved them, this pharaoh had to keep them under control. This was about Pharaoh's exerting his power over them.



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# Harder and Better

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- Pharaoh knew what he demanded of them was impossible.
- He knew that without straw, they couldn't make as many bricks as they had been making.
- This was a way of reminding them he was in total control over them.
- He could be completely irrational in his demands, and there was nothing they could do about it.
- He called them lazy, and he made the rules.



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# Harder and Better

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- It was also a way for him to alienate the people from Moses and Aaron as well as from God.
- Pharaoh was the one who made their work impossible, but he blamed Moses and Aaron for their desire to go sacrifice to the Lord, which would drive a wedge between them and the people and turn them away from God.
- Turning the people against the One who could save them from the dictator is also classic dictatorial behavior.



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# Harder and Better

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- Even though Moses and Aaron had power and the words from God, things didn't go their way right away.
- Pharaoh didn't immediately release God's people. In fact, things got much, much harder for them. All of this is such a turn of events from what we expected given the first few verses.
- It reminds us that we can't assume that just because God has called us to a mission and given us everything we need, everything will be easy, and there won't be any bumps in the road along the way.



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# Harder and Better

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- God had told Moses that Pharaoh wouldn't release the people right away.
- It would take the death of his firstborn son to finally let the people go.
- They should have expected something like this.
- But expecting something doesn't make it easy to handle.
- Doubting Moses and God and the whole mission would have been a natural reaction.



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# Harder and Better

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- God never promised smooth sailing on following Him through this life.
- “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you” (Isaiah 43:2).
- Jesus said if we truly followed Him, we would be persecuted as the prophets were (Matthew 5:10–12; John 15:18–27).
- James and Paul said we should rejoice in our suffering because it produces perseverance, faith, character and hope in us (Romans 5:3–5; James 1:2–4).



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# Harder and Better

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- In Moses' mission in Exodus, the end of the story would be the deliverance of God's people.
- But there would be a lot of bumps along the way to get there.
- Even though God was with him, even though God gave him miraculous powers, even though God chose him to be His spokesperson before Pharaoh.
- The hardships didn't mean that God wasn't with Him or that God wasn't good. It was part of the process and part of the story.



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# Hard Times Show God's Power

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- God uses hard times to show His power
- Exodus 5:19–6:1
- When Pharaoh made their work harder, the people turned against Moses and Aaron. They even called for God to judge them.
- Then Moses blamed God – “Why have you done evil to this people.” He spoke with despair – “You have not delivered your people at all.”
- Did you send me here only to make things worse for your people?



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# Hard Times Show God's Power

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- Moses doubted God's end-of-the-story promise – that He would rescue His people through Moses – because he was in the middle of the story and things weren't going the way he had envisioned right now.
- How often have we had this kind of reaction when things don't go as we think they should go?
- Even when it comes to His plan and His mission, we seem to think we know better than God.
- If things aren't going our way, we doubt Him.



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# Hard Times Show God's Power

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- God didn't give up on Moses.
- He said, "Now you shall see ..." (6:1).
- Because they had gone through this hard time, now they would see the greatness of God's mighty hand.
- God is the Almighty, and He can conquer anyone and anything, of course.
- But showing us how powerful Pharaoh was and how much effort he put into fighting against God helps us really realize just how amazing God is.



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# Hard Times Show God's Power

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- If Pharaoh had just let them go from the beginning, the story of the Exodus wouldn't seem like such a big deal.
- But Pharaoh's power and hardness of heart only serve to make the story of God's redemption even more powerful. God even said this was why He raised up Pharaoh – to show His power (Exodus 9:16–18; Romans 9:17–18).
- God used Pharaoh's story to show the world just how great and powerful and loving He is.



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# Hard Times Show God's Power

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- This is why we can trust God when we are in the middle of the story, the middle of the struggle, the middle of the mess.
- We can know that the ending – our salvation from sin and eternal life with Him in heaven – will turn out just as He promised even if everything doesn't seem great right now.
- If things don't seem rosy, that doesn't mean God isn't with us or that we aren't following His will. It just means we haven't gotten to the end of the story. He is still working things out, and He will work it for our good in the end (Romans 8:28).



# Application: When Nothing Goes Right

Ray Pritchard



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# The Impossible

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- When God is working, things often get worse before they get better.
- God's way is rarely the easy way.
- He routinely puts us in impossible situations so we will discover that we can't, but He can.
- Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, put it this way:
- "There are three stages in any great work attempted for God: impossible, difficult, done."



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# 1. Oppression (verses 1-14)

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- He did not know the Lord, so he would not obey him. The ultimate issue is the same for us as it was for Pharaoh: Who's running the show? Pharaoh will soon find out the answer the hard way.
- He accused the Jews of trying to trick him into letting them go. Then he ordered the foremen to stop supplying straw for the bricks they were making. So now the Jews had to scramble to find straw to meet their quota.
- The situation has gone from bad to worse.



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## 2. Frustration (verses 15-21)

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- Moses had to learn “death to self.”
  - Death to his plans.
  - Death to his dreams.
  - Death to his ambition.
  - Death to his schemes.
  - Death to his leadership.
  - Death to his popularity.



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## 3. Lamentation (verses 22-23)

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- Notice the pronouns Moses uses:
- “I spoke in your name, and that didn’t work out at all. These are your people, and you have not rescued them.”
- Those pronouns are reminding God that this was His plan from the beginning.
- Essentially he was saying, “I did my part. Why don’t you do yours?”



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# Lessons for Today

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- God often reveals his will through early opposition.
  - Because Pharaoh did not know him as the Deliverer, he would soon know him as the Destroyer.
- God's timetable and ours are not the same.
  - At this point, Moses doesn't know about the ten plagues or even being trapped by the Red Sea.
- God's power works best in our weakness.



*I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;  
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.*

*I asked for health, that I might do greater things;  
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.*

*I asked for riches, that I might be happy;  
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.*

*I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;  
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.*

*I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;  
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.*

*I got nothing I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.  
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.*

*I am, among men, most richly blessed.*